

## The Jouissance of Jargon

Hugh S. Manon

Just a little deuce coupe with a flat head mill  
But she'll walk a Thunderbird like she's standin' still  
She's ported and relieved and she's stroked and bored  
She'll do a hundred and forty in the top end floored [. . .]

She's got a competition clutch with the four on the floor  
And she purrs like a kitten till the Lake Pipes roar  
And if that ain't enough to make you flip your lid  
There's one more thing, I got the pink slip, Daddy

She's my little deuce coupe  
You don't know what I got

--The Beach Boys' "Little Deuce Coupe"  
lyrics by Brian Wilson and Roger Christian

Originally released in the U.S. in 1963, the Beach Boys' "Little Deuce Coupe" has enjoyed tremendous longevity as a pop-cultural artifact. Beyond its nostalgic doo-wop style, much of the song's persistence can be attributed to the delightful opacity of its lyrics—words that make no more sense to the average listener today than they did in the sixties. Penned by disc jockey and drag-racing enthusiast Roger "Hot Dog Rog" Christian in collaboration with Brian Wilson,<sup>1</sup> the lyrics revel in their own insiderness, alternating semi-comprehensible gearhead slang ("top end," "four on the floor") with more technical phrases that surrender even less of their meaning ("ported and relieved," "stroked and bored," and "Lake Pipes"). But despite the fact that the majority of the song's strange phraseology fails to register with the listener, when taken as a set it becomes clear that these words denote something very precise and necessary to the routine labors of the singers. In this way, the lyrics succeed (in impressing us) to the precise extent that they fail (to convey meaning). Crucial, too, is the fact that the song does not seem to care at all whether we "get it." Faced with such indifference, the listener admires the song's discourse *qua* discourse, while not necessarily aspiring to find a way in. My point is that it is possible to remain locked outside of meaning and nonetheless value a text's terminology as authentic—here, an indicator that the Beach Boys, or at least the imagined personae who sing the lyrics, are hardcore hot-rodders who really know what they are talking about. The end result is not so much that the vocabulary of West Coast hot rod culture becomes poetic, but that it becomes "cool."

While the Beach Boys' paean to modified, high-performance automobiles may not be the most obvious site from which to launch an argument about academic jargon, the lyrics of "Little Deuce Coupe" provide an interesting test-case in two ways. First, like all

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jargon, the lyrics establish a clear boundary between insider and outsider—evoking an insular world which one immediately recognizes either as familiar or as alien. By “talking the talk” so extensively, the Beach Boys permit the listener a glimpse of their secret club without supplying the passkey. Clearly there is something to be envied inside. Second, the lyrics conflate (or at least confuse) the domains of slang and jargon; they are neither clearly one nor the other, underscoring the fact that the two modes of expression are related and not diametrically opposed, as one might assume. Like the cars they modify both for looks and for speed, the argot of the hot-rodder is a souped-up language robbed from language itself. It is here that the lyrics are most illuminating vis-à-vis academic jargon. As I go on to argue, the word “jargon” tends to be brandished when a reader mistakes the endless hard labors involved in customizing language for something quite the opposite: a prefabricated or “stock” secret language that is too wrapped up in itself. Or, in different terms, jargon tends to be marked as such, and subsequently derided, not simply because it is incomprehensible, but when a recipient senses that its users are enjoying too much.

### Unpopular Mechanics

Both slang and jargon owe much of their power to the probability that once a certain word is deployed, a second message—that only a selected “set” are in on the communication—will be communicated loud and clear. In this sense, “Little Deuce Coupe” is not a tease, so much as a playful taunt: “You don’t know what I got,” indeed. But if slang and jargon are related to one another as specialized usages, and at times indistinguishable, then why is jargon (flagged as such only by its detractors) met with such revulsion and ire, whereas slang (like its close cousins, dialect and vernacular) is more likely to be celebrated? That is, in contrast to the bemused puzzlement with which one encounters slang, why does jargon automatically compel its detractors to retch up the phlegmatic term that designates it: “*Jahrrrgunn! Arrrgh!*” The answer to this question is a complex one, and the explanation I offer in this short essay admittedly oversimplifies things a bit. Nonetheless, I want to begin by offering a blunt hypothesis regarding the impulse to vilify jargon. Unlike slang, when we encounter jargon, one thing is certain: someone out there is enjoying, but it is not us. These are precisely the terms in which I wish to understand jargon: as a stalling out of signification wherein a reader or listener becomes aware not of the inaccessibility of meaning, but of the impossibility of *jouissance*—an enjoyment beyond enjoyment that belongs solely to the other, and which disrupts its recipient’s lesser satisfactions.

In most contexts, including discourse that is supposed to offend its receiver, slang decodes as warm, rich, and excessive—a harmonic distortion in language, a deliberate and sometimes gross attempt to overdrive the normal channels. In slang, the speaker wears her enjoyment on her sleeve and tacitly invites others to share in it, to circulate it.<sup>ii</sup> In contrast to this, jargon is usually understood as cold, alienating, wall-like. Far from an invitation to the party, jargon opens the door just enough to let the recipient know that someone is home, then slams it in their face. To the outsider, most specialized terminology is instantly recognizable as such. One does not easily pass by a word like *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* or *solenoid* or *aliasing* or *meme* without taking notice. However, even when a reader is confronted by a perfectly alien term—one that

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absolutely fails to decode—the appellation “jargon” is not yet merited. It is only when a would-be participant feels snubbed by his or her exclusion, and not aroused or seduced by it, that the charge of jargon comes into play. For the purposes of this essay, then, the word “jargon” can be understood simply as that which jargon-haters hate. The tautology is crucial, since hatred is the only context in which the word has meaning. Ontologically, jargon can be likened to a callus. Jargon is not the offending stone in one’s shoe (which could be anything, or nothing), but rather the ever-hardening sore spot that develops because of it. “In itself,” jargon does not properly exist.

Owing in large part to their ideological conflation of democracy, populism, and a set of presumptions about the individual’s right to access information, Americans (and not only Americans) recoil when they sense that an English-language word does not mean what it means. George W. Bush is presumably a jargon-hater, having railed against “a lot of blowhards in the political process, you know, a lot of hot-air artists, people who have got something fancy to say.”<sup>iii</sup> Equally anti-jargon are numerous customer reviewers on Amazon.com, who with striking regularity give jargon-laden books one star out of five. Such critics lambaste authors for being arcane, ponderous, pretentious, and dry. The tagline for a January 19, 2000 customer review of Braudy and Cohen’s anthology *Film Theory and Criticism* nicely encapsulates this anti-jargon sentiment: “Reads More Like A Rocket Manual.” The point of such disparagement is not that anyone thinks all language should be immediately transparent. Even the most sophisticated readers occasionally stumble on a term that requires a kind of interpretive triage. In such cases, one typically gleans the meaning of the troublesome word from context, or retreats to a standard dictionary to look it up. Jargon is different; it overwhelms, seeming to taunt the reader with the absolute impossibility of such triage. Unlike the quasi-slang discourse of the hot-rodder, one cannot even begin to guess what jargon means, which is to say there is nothing “cool” about it.

On first encounter, jargon is an indigestible non-sequitur: not a bone in your salmon fillet, but a bone in your apple pie. Lacking the bastardized irreverence of slang, jargon indifferently stares down its recipient. Not only is jargon discourteous, but also unapologetic when it offends. The reader is tempted to conclude that the author must be playing games. Particularly objectionable are foreign language words, newly-coined portmanteaux, subfield-specific buzzwords, and other terms whose existence “outside the dictionary” confers upon them a tinge of perversion. Beyond eccentric, such terms are perceived as decadent, sybaritic, incestuous. It is this phenomenon—the idea that jargon seems to be enjoying itself at the reader’s expense—that I wish to address here. What appears below, then, is not an essay on jargon *per se*, but on the hatred of it—a kind of spurned jealousy of the other’s (ab)use of language which is, paradoxically, the only way jargon can be defined.

### Language and *Lebensneid*

There can be little question that the word “jargon” itself *works* as a signifier, but only when it is pointed at something, unifying the speaker and his or her imagined receiver in a common mistrust. In his preface to *Homographesis*, Lee Edelman provides what is

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perhaps the most compelling defense of jargon as it is used in the humanities, understanding it as a form of “defiant luxury”:

The demand [. . .] that critical writing be purged of “jargon” and specialized language acquires its “humanistic” or “commonsensical” appeal only insofar as we are willing to ignore how the demonized term here, “jargon,” serves as the very thing it denounces: a jargonistic code, like “family values” as used at the Republican National Convention in 1992, that assumes, disingenuously and with oppressive effects, the availability of a common ground of shared assumptions and understandings, of universally acknowledged truths and expressions, all of which are adequate to the expression of any concept worth our consideration. [. . .] The fiction of a common language that can speak a universally available truth, or even a universally available logic, is the fantasy on which the structures of dominance [. . .] rest.<sup>iv</sup>

However, whereas the phrase “family values” has been increasingly recognized as jargonistic code since its emergence in 1992 (thanks in large part to critics such as Edelman), the word “jargon” remains almost entirely unimpugned as the jargon that it is. The demonization of jargon is rampant in 2008 and certainly shows no signs of abating. According to the humanistic common sense of the anti-jargonists, authors should strive for clarity (some would say above all) in order to engage a wider potential readership, or at least to avoid losing anybody. But in fixing on such lofty goals, the anti-jargonists overlook the real stakes of their own engagement with jargon: a desire to stamp out a conflagration of excess enjoyment—a perceived *jouissance* of attainment, somewhere out there, in which jargon proliferates freely and needs no translation.

To be clear, I am employing the word *jouissance* in a specifically Lacanian sense as both a transgression of homeostasis and a prolonged orgasmic bliss that no one actually experiences. *Jouissance* does not precisely equate with enjoyment per se—this definition is too simplistic. Rather, *jouissance* can be understood as the imagined existence of an unattainably full, complete and total enjoyment *over there*, in contrast to the only-ever-partial pleasures humans are relegated to endure *here*, in their daily lives. Quite opposed to our momentary satisfaction in attaining some goal, *jouissance* is that which lies behind *Studio 54*'s velvet rope—not necessarily as it was in reality, but as it was represented to the average American on nightly news broadcasts circa 1978: a hedonistic *sanctum sanctorum* in which anything goes. In this context, it is important to consider the word “jargon” in combination with the word that most often precedes it: *impenetrable*. If one could only manage to penetrate into the zone beyond jargon's burly bouncer, then one presumes (incorrectly, for reasons I go on to explain) that VIP access to enjoyment would surely follow. This notion of an ultimate—and ultimately inaccessible—state of repletion is perhaps most succinctly expressed in a scene from the long-running NBC sitcom *Friends*. In one episode, Chandler (Matthew Perry) and Phoebe (Lisa Kudrow) both refuse to admit that their alleged attraction to each other is a ruse. As they uncomfortably work their way toward consummation, and their feigned sexy come-ons escalate, Chandler blurts out that he looks forward to having “*all the sex*” with Phoebe. According to Juliet Flower McCannell, “Jouissance [. . .] is that mythically sublime substance that everyone has an interest in keeping undivided, but of which each

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nonetheless demands his fair share.”<sup>v</sup> In this way, *jouissance* can be understood as all the sex, all the knowledge, all the wealth—and in the case of jargon, all the language.

Given all this, it is no great leap to connect jargon with the violation of an incest taboo.<sup>vi</sup> Jargon flaunts the incest prohibition because the jargon-user does just what he pleases with language, and is perceived as “keeping it in the family” (of philosophers, theorists, and intellectuals of various stripes) at the expense of the social. Likewise, it should come as no surprise that jargon-haters not only lash out against the individual words on the page they perceive to be jargon, but also conceive of those who employ jargon collectively as “users.” The term is loaded, connoting addiction, hoarding, endless repetition, clandestine meetings in tiny groups, and of course excess—an enjoyment beyond enjoyment. In all of these ways, jargon-hating can be understood as a form of *Lebensneid*, an envy-in-general of the other’s extravagant, irresponsible enjoyment. From Lacan’s Seminar VII:

*Lebensneid* is not an ordinary jealousy. It is the jealousy born in a subject in his relation to an other, insofar as this other is held to enjoy a certain form of *jouissance* or superabundant vitality that the subject perceives as something he cannot apprehend by means of even the most elementary of affective movements. Isn’t it strange, very odd, that a being admits to being jealous of something in the other to the point of hatred and the need to destroy, jealous of something that he is incapable of apprehending in any way, by any intuitive path?<sup>vii</sup>

According to this definition, jargon-hating can be understood as a form of *Lebensneid* in two distinct senses. First, jargon-haters perceive themselves as cut-off, isolated, from another group (always a “they,” never a “she” or “he”) who enjoys both freely and intensely. The perceived relation, here, is that of the lonely individual left out of the clique—the one excluded from the many. Second, as Lacan stresses, the experience of *Lebensneid* hinges not on an envy of what the other tangibly and self-evidently *has* (i.e. a sporty new car, an attractive mate, superior employment status, etc.), but rather depends on a failure to apprehend the precise coordinates of the other’s pleasure. In *Lebensneid*, the subject *knows not what* the other enjoys and thus seeks to destroy it, to bring down the other’s *jouissance*.<sup>viii</sup> I can think of no better way to conceive the rabid, trigger-happy invective of the jargon-hater than as *Lebensneid*—a wholesale, spiteful rejection of a practice, spurred by the envy of a league of others, the source of whose intense vitality cannot be intuitively grasped.

In a strong sense, Lacan’s account of *Lebensneid* recalls H.L. Mencken’s famous definition of Puritanism: “the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.” This is not at all to suggest that the perpetuators of academic jargon actually enjoy in this way. Indeed, the core of the Lacanian conception of *jouissance* is its status as imaginary, a pure semblance. In the parlance of psychoanalysis, *jouissance* is only ever the illusion of *jouissance*—a perception of fullness that mobilizes the desire of individual subjects, but which no human subject actually *has*. Tim Dean’s reformulation of Lacan’s aphorism about transference is particularly salient here. Whereas psychoanalytic transference can be defined as an arrangement in which, “he whom I suppose to know, I love,” in the subject’s encounter with the other’s *jouissance*, the scenario is quite opposite:

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“*he whom I suppose to know how to enjoy, I hate.*”<sup>ix</sup> Such a response depends on a profound misrecognition of the true state of affairs, however: just as no one (including the beloved analyst) fully knows, no one knows how to fully enjoy. The problem, of course, is that although *Lebensneid* is categorically founded on a misapprehension, it can nonetheless produce effects in the real. As McCannell notes, “the fear your neighbor has stolen your enjoyment, giv[es] you the right to deprive him of the enjoyment you have been deprived of.”<sup>x</sup> When they flag certain texts as jargon-laden, express their dissatisfaction as consumers (as on Amazon.com), or exercise their editorial veto power, jargon-haters only view themselves as taking back what is rightfully theirs.<sup>xi</sup> Assailed in this way, jargon-users have little choice but to take up arms, defending their ownership of something no one ever had in the first place.

### Academy Fight Song

In a January 2008 blog entry on *The New York Times* website, Stanley Fish identifies academic jargon as a popular point of contention in debates about the practical value of humanities education:

The challenge of utility is not put (except by avowed Philistines) to literary artists, but to the scholarly machinery that seems to take those operating it further and further away from the primary texts into the reaches of incomprehensible and often corrosive theory. More than one poster decried the impenetrable jargon of literary studies. Why, one wonders, is the same complaint not made against physics or economics or biology or psychology, all disciplines with vocabularies entirely closed to the uninitiated?<sup>xii</sup>

The specific logic of Fish’s protestation is not uncommon. Imagine the outrage if an editor of a medical journal refused to accept articles that resorted to using words like *homocysteine*, *endothelial*, and *tonometry*. If other highly-educated specialists are permitted their jargon as a matter of course, why are humanities scholars not extended the same privilege?

For Fish, professionals in the so-called “hard sciences” get away with their extensive use of jargon because their research is presumed to benefit the greater good. Physicists, chemists, and astronomers “are understood to be up to something and to be promising a payoff that will someday benefit even those who couldn’t read a page of their journals.”<sup>xiii</sup> The same could presumably be said of architects, food scientists, computer programmers, and ceramics engineers—all of whose day-to-day activities are heavily jargon-dependent. While it seems reasonable enough to cite this imbalance in defense of both humanities education and its liberal use of jargon, the analogy does little to explain why humanities scholars encounter a resistance to jargon even *from other humanities scholars*. Perhaps because Fish is so well established in his field, he does not remember that some of the gnarliest wrangling over jargon occurs between specialists within the same field or sub-field. Most significantly, however, Fish fails to account the inordinate spitefulness with which humanities jargon is often met—the surplus of righteous indignation that characterizes a number of the responses to his blog entry.

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Jargon-haters do not merely reject jargon, or quietly ignore it, but are all too eager to register their umbrage publicly, stomping up and down and making a big show of it. They are like the streetwise police detective in a television crime drama who patiently hears out the consulting psychiatrist, but finally can't take it anymore: "Forgive me if I don't have the utmost confidence in your professional opinion, *doctor*."

Who are these academic enemies of academic jargon? As Lee Edelman suggests, jargon-haters are both humanists and advocates of common sense, believers that the best way to ensure fair access to the benefits of language is to insist on its comprehensibility from the top down. According to this line of thought, words may evolve "on their own," but no single person or cabal, however famous or obscure, should be permitted to consciously invent words, or systems of language, within language itself. In other words, the anti-jargonist views his enemy as pushing too hard in a race to abandon what has already been defined. Clearly, such attitudes can proliferate in virtually any corner of the academy, but rather than dance the around the issue too much, and at the risk of stereotyping (which is not at all my intent), let's just come out and say it: plenty of the academics who revile jargon are historians of one sort or another. I do not expect this assertion to come as any surprise to anyone. Yet, at the same time, I do not wish to suggest that all historians are jargon-haters. This statement is simply untrue, but should not blind us from the fact that many jargon-haters are historians, or at the very least people who conceive of research in the way that historians traditionally have done. I would not even raise the issue, mind you, if the preceding pages did not beg a crucial question. If jargon outwardly signifies the *jouissance* of the theorist, where might we look to find the parallel *jouissance* of the historian—the site at which the historian is supposed to enjoy freely and fully?

Can there be any question about it? The locus of the historian's *jouissance* is the dark, inaccessible tomb of the *archive* in all its various forms—the basement of culture in which all the proof resides, but to which access is denied to all but a select few. The imagined pleasures of historical investigation are profoundly seductive: one travels great distances and digs through dusty tomes to find the exact spot where crucial pieces of evidence have been lost—overgrown by the kudzu of the present.<sup>xiv</sup> It is like a *CSI* episode, but with books instead of bodies. Appointments must be confirmed in advance; areas are cordoned off; sometimes latex gloves are involved. On occasion, too, the historian is permitted access to *the thing itself*: not a transcription or photocopy of Welles's communiqué to Universal, but the one with his actual signature on it.

"Yeah, yeah," says the historian, "It's nothing so thrilling as all that"—which is exactly how I, an inveterate jargon-user, feel about jargon. Clearly, the enjoyment of the archive is no less illusory than the *jouissance* of jargon is for theorists. What, as a theorist, I imagine to be the *jouissance* of the archive, the historian must inevitably regard differently—as a time-consuming due diligence that verges on toil. Yet quite significantly, there is no buzzword (no jargon such as the word "jargon") waiting to be spat forth when the products of archival research overrun a book, essay, or conference paper. Consider the high improbability of a historian receiving a referee report that excoriates his essay for including "too much *trivia*," and you will see that that the *Lebensneid* of the humanities flows mostly in one direction, not the other, and that presently the floodgates are wide open.

## Conclusion

Though undoubtedly as overdetermined as any phobia, fear of academic jargon inevitably bespeaks a knowledge of something scandalously unshocking: that the unequal distribution of wealth translates itself into an unequal distribution of *pleasures*.

--Joseph Litvak, from *Strange Gourmets: Sophistication, Theory and the Novel*<sup>xv</sup>

When it comes to publishing, most young scholars attempt to identify journals and presses well-suited both to their subject area and methodology. Yet even having taken such steps, jargon can be an absolute deal-breaker between scholars who dare to use jargon full-force and the editors who receive their work. If a Lacanian film theorist submits for publication a paper containing the terms “sinthome,” “*objet petit a*,” and “the Name-of-the-Father,” he or she needs to be very careful, since there exist more than a few editors who would reject such work out of hand (liberally invoking the J-word, no doubt). This is to say nothing of the members of various admissions and hiring committees, who may encounter all manner of jargon in writing samples, cover letters, job talks, and so on, but who are for legal reasons less likely to comment on the specific reasons an applicant has been rejected.

There can be little question that the term “jargon” is prejudicial, and it should not surprise us that Roland Barthes (here, referring to himself in the third person) compares the popular reception of his use of theoretical jargon to a kind of racism:

Public opinion does not like the language of intellectuals. Hence he has often been dismissed by an accusation of intellectualist jargon. And hence he felt himself to be the object of a kind of racism: they excluded his language, i.e., his body: “you don’t talk the way I do, so I exclude you.”<sup>xvi</sup>

Does Barthes overstate the case when he compares jargon-haters to racists? Not if we are clear on the point that Barthes’ concern is with structure, not content. It is the impetus to a knee-jerk exclusion that links jargon-hating with racism, a point about which psychoanalytic theorist Jacques-Alain Miller might well agree. According to Miller, racists are above all guilty of overestimating, and thus inappropriately resenting the other’s *jouissance*:

Racism is founded on what one imagines about the Other’s *jouissance*; it is hatred of the particular way, of the Other’s own way, of experiencing *jouissance*. We may well think that racism exists because our Islamic

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neighbor is too noisy when he has parties. However, what is really at stake is that he takes his *jouissance* in a way different from ours. [. . .] Racist stories are always about the way in which an Other obtains a *plus-de-jouir*. Either he does not work or he does not work enough, or he is useless or a little too useful, but whatever the case may be, he is always endowed with a part of *jouissance* that he does not deserve.<sup>xvii</sup>

For Miller, the overestimation of the Other's enjoyment figures as a "*plus-de-jouir*," or surplus *jouissance*, to which no one is entitled. The result is prejudice, private derision, and public mockery—yet does the scenario Miller outlines not precisely accord with the *modus operandi* of the jargon-hater? The obvious retort to such prejudice is simply to point out that no one has it, and no one ever will. But this will be of no consolation to the jargon-hater, whose concerns are less philosophical, more immediate: *what on earth is this word, right here on the page in front of me, supposed to mean?! Or, to repeat the mantra of the contemporary American racist, which is exactly no different from that of the jargon-hater: why don't they just speak English?!*

*Hugh S. Manon (Ph.D. Pittsburgh) is an Assistant Professor in the Screen Studies Program at Oklahoma State University, where he specializes in Lacanian theory and film noir. He has published in Cinema Journal, Film Criticism, International Journal of Zizek Studies, and several anthologies. He recently led a graduate seminar entitled "Lacan and His Followers" and has taught courses on Lo-Fi and Punk Aesthetics at both the graduate and undergraduate level.*

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<sup>i</sup> Philip Lambert, *Inside the Music of Brian Wilson: The Songs, Sounds and Influences of the Beach Boys' Founding Genius* (New York: Continuum International, 2007), 65.

<sup>ii</sup> Unlike jargon, which may be invented by its user (i.e. a neologism), we tend to think of slang as a social usage one encounters and perpetuates, rather than a word that any one person willfully contrives. It suffices to recall a line from the film *Mean Girls* (Mark Waters, 2004): "Gretchen, stop trying to make 'fetch' happen. It's not going to happen."

<sup>iii</sup> White House press conference with President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, Washington, D.C., May 17, 2007.

<sup>iv</sup> Lee Edelman, *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), xvii.

<sup>v</sup> Juliet Flower McCannell, "Between the Two Fears," in *Lacan and Contemporary Film*, ed. Todd McGowan and Sheila Kunkle (New York: Other Press, 2004), 48.

<sup>vi</sup> Incest is precisely what Chandler avoids by admitting the ruse and refusing to have "all the sex" with Phoebe, whose character is the most sister-like of the *Friends* cast.

<sup>vii</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1997), 237.

<sup>viii</sup> This is precisely why, to the jargon-haters, using jargon very precisely and systematically or using it recklessly amount to the same thing. In either case, something excessive is going on behind the green door.

<sup>ix</sup> Tim Dean, *Beyond Sexuality* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000), 127.

<sup>x</sup> McCannell, "Two Fears," 51.

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<sup>xi</sup> This explains the troubling fact that the charge of jargon is most often a justification for dismissal, rarely a constructive critique. For jargon-haters, to disparage what they perceive to be the other's excessive enjoyment eclipses any real concerns about clarity or scholarly rigor.

<sup>xii</sup> Stanley Fish, "The Uses of the Humanities, Part Two," *The New York Times* (accessed January 14, 2008) <http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/13/the-uses-of-the-humanities-part-two/>.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xiv</sup> The necessity of travel to historical research would seem to categorically void the charge that theory is elitist—or at least the more elitist of the two. It is the practice of the historian, and not the theorist, which necessitates the international travel most graduate students, and some faculty, will never be able to afford. In contrast, theoretical work minimally requires only a good library—or a good inter-library loan system—caffeine (optional), and a quiet place to read and write. In terms of the economics of academia, what could be less elitist than "doing theory"?

<sup>xv</sup> Joseph Litvak, *Strange Gourmets: Sophistication, Theory and the Novel* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 147.

<sup>xvi</sup> Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 103.

<sup>xvii</sup> Jacques-Alain Miller, "Extimité," in *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society*, ed. Mark Bracher (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 80.